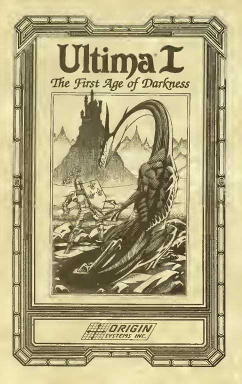

Ultima I
The First Age of Darkness
ORIGIN
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The Adventure

Hail, Noble One! Our land is in need of a stalwart hero, one who will brave perils too horrific to consider. A plague has befallen the Realm, a scourge is upon the land! Our villages lie sacked, ruinous mounds of ashes where once trod peasants stout of heart and sound of mind, where once lay fields of grain and fruit, where kine and fowl grew fat upon the bounties of our fair Sosaria. All manner of wicked and vile creatures prey upon our people and ravage the land. 'Tis the doing of one so evil that the very earth trembles at the mention of his name.



Mondain the Wizard hath wrought his malice well. Our nobles bicker amongst themselves, and

each hath retired to the confines of his keep in hopes of watching the downfall of his rivals. Verily, the Evil One hath heaped indignity upon curse by releasing upon the Realm a host of creatures and beasts so bloodthirsty and wicked that our defenseless people fall as grain before the reaper's scythe. These denizens of the underworld hald sway over all that can be surveyed, save for the strongholds of the nobles besotted with their own ambition. Nowhere in our once peaceful country may a traveller find safe passage or lodging, save in the keeps of the self-proclaimed kings -- and they demand hard labors for their indulgences.

Only the young Lord British remains steadfast in the vision of a peaceful and united Sosaria. In his castle and his towne the pure of heart will find an ally and replenishment for the needs of one who hath chosen to fight for the Realm.

Aid us in ridding our land of the scourge that hath befallen us, O Noble One. We beseech thee, for without thine aid we shall surely perish before the onslaught of the maleficent necromancer. Slay the evil Mondain!

Fellowship

The lands of Sosaria are populated by a diversity of races as varied as the elements. From the tiniest bobbit to the most towering human, our folk show a strength of character unknown in other parts of the world. Until the coming of the foul Mondain, our folk lived in harmony and worked together in the true spirit of comrade-ship. The principal inhabitants of Sosaria are:

Human: Endowed with a natural intellect higher than any other race, the humans are the backbone of Sosarian society. Found in all walks of life, they are strong of body and of unexcelled spirit.

Elf: Shorter than their human counterparts by the span of three hands, the elves of Sosaria are slight of build and swift of movement. Their superior natural agility makes them excellent musicians and clever thieves. At home amongst the trees of the deepest forest or in the alleyways of the capital, The Sosarian Elf makes a stalwart companion and a relentless foe.



Dwarf: Mountain folk and legendary miners, the dwarves of Sosaria stand but half a human's height, yet often outweigh slender elves. They are matchless in courage and possess an inordinate endowment of natural strength. Never accept the Sosarian Dwarf's challenge to wrestle for drinks in a tavern, unless thy supply of gold be endless and thy generosity ample.

Bobbit: A small and gentle race, the Sosarian Bobbits are believed to have come to our Realm from a distant place. They are said to favour mountainside meadows and the serenity of forest clearings. Their diminutive height being even less than that of a dwarf, they shun any task that involves hard, physical labour, preferring instead the pursuits of study and contemplation. Bobbits are naturally weak, yet possess a serenity indicative of profound wisdom.

Professions

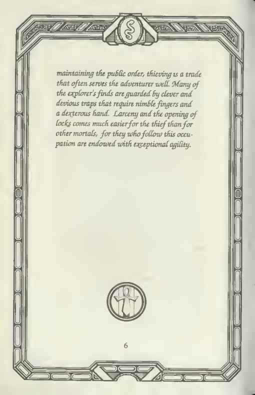
Whilst the professions practiced by our folk are numerous, there are but four courses of action that may be followed by the novice adventurer. These are:

Fighter -- *The rigorous training involved in learning to become a fighter results in a stronger, more agile adventurer. The knowledge acquired during this period permits the fighter to use virtually every kind of weapon that might be found in Sosaria.*

Cleric -- *A profession suited to those who are of an introspective nature, the study of the ways of the cleric requires patience and results in a good deal of wisdom. Such is their calm and concentration that at no time will the proper spell cast by a cleric fail to attain its desired result.*

Wizard -- *To become a wizard in our Realm, one must study long and diligently, poring over ancient writings and dusty tomes. Mastery of the arcane arts comes not easily, yet such training hones the intellect to a superior edge! The fruits of the long years of discipline are deemed to be worth the effort, however, for only the wizard may purchase the necessary supplies for the casting of the more powerful enchantments.*

Thief -- *Whilst not a profession held in the highest esteem among those charged with*



maintaining the public order, thieving is a trade that often serves the adventurer well. Many of the explorer's finds are guarded by clever and devious traps that require nimble fingers and a dexterous hand. Larceny and the opening of locks comes much easier for the thief than for other mortals, for they who follow this occupation are endowed with exceptional agility.



Castles & Townes

Sosaria is a land dotted with the castles of the nobility of the Realm and with numerous townes wherein the traveller might purchase supplies and provender. Townes and castles may be entered freely, but woe to the one who foolishly is apprehended in an act of thievery, for the public order is maintained here by burly Guards who fear none.

Each castle is held by a noble, the King of his particular region. Visit these local rulers, they have much to offer the adventurer. The castles are often built of stone and peopled with merchants, courtiers, guards and fools. Beware of the jesters, for although they amuse, they may also deceive.







Shoppes

The merchant class of Sosaria is the mainstay of the Realm's economy. All manner of trade goods -- foodstuffs and the handiwork of local artisans -- can be found in the towne and castle shoppes. An adequate supply of gold will help to equip the adventurer with everything from rations to the most esoteric of weapons Some of the more common emporiums include:



Armoury -- The tailors of protective garments await your pleasure in the armouries of Sosaria. The finest craftsmen in the Realm will swiftly fit out the adventurer in a suit made of worked leather or metal. Price varies according to the level of protection offered by the suit of armour.

Weapons -- The workers of metal in Sosaria know no peer. From a simple carved mace, reinforced with good iron, to the most exquisitely crafted greatswords of tempered steel, the weapons found in the shoppes of the Realm are truly

works of art. 'Tis rumored that some of the arms one may find in the distant reaches of our land surpass belief.



Transportation -- *Whilst one may travel throughout much of the Realm afoot, there are alternate means of transport that make short journeys pass more quickly, and longer journeys feasible where once such voyages seemed unattainable. Common modes of travel include the use of horses and of sea-going vessels. Uncommon modes of travel are also rumoured to exist.*

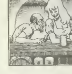
Magic -- *A once-forgotten discipline, the study of magic has enjoyed a renaissance since the coming*



of the evil Mondain. Many hold the belief that sorcery is indeed needed to combat sorcery. The practitioner of the arcane arts can purchase the needed tools of the trade in various magic shoppes scattered throughout the Realm.

Food -- None can live without sustenance. The food shoppes of Sosaria provide the local populace with fresh produce and meats, while the adventurer can find provisions therein that will last for weeks in the wilderness with no special care.

Pubs -- The people of our land are not without a certain fondness for strong spirits and lively companionship. Most settlements are graced with public houses where a tankard of strong ale from the region of Trinsic or a flagon of the best Jhelom

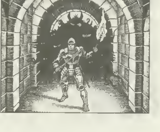


mead may be had for but a few coins. Many of the people found in these taverns are quite friendly, and the ones serving the drinks are often fountains of wisdom and gossip.



Dungeons

Our land is an ancient one, where strange and wondrous beings once walked the earth and civilizations rose and fell. There are numerous underground labyrinths to be found throughout Sosaria, the handiwork of unspeakable creatures and unknown forces. These mazes have become the dwellings of many of the horrors unleashed by Mondain upon our poor land. Indeed, the lowest depths of some of these hellholes contain creatures that make even the staunchest warriors blanch and tremble.



Yet these subterranean passages also contain caches of the ill-gotten gains of the predations of Mondain's minions. An intrepid adventurer can finance many an expedition with the spoils of a careful foray in the dungeons of Sosaria. Hearken to my words: The use of extreme caution is needed when exploring underground. The corridors of the dungeons are lined with the bones of explorers who overestimated their abilities!

Starwalking

Before the archmage Mondain can be defeated, one's mettle will first have to be tested in the farthest reaches of the heavens. 'Tis said that the Evil One has formed alliances with starwalking monsters of unparalleled savagery. These malicious creatures stand posed to swoop down upon our people and devastate them. The need to slay the vile wizard is redoubled in the face of this threat.

Should a champion emerge from the mists of legend, the means by which to combat this menace from the skies will appear -- so say the prophets. The legends which foretell of this hero include a number of writings and several ballads sung by

the bards of our Realm. Among the more recent discoveries pertaining to the coming of the starwalkers is an arcane manuscript, found on the foothills of Mt. Drash. Since it appears to hold instructions for the use some form of transport, it has been broadcast throughout the land in hopes that it might prove useful to one engaged in the quest to rid Sosaria of Mondain. The substance of the document is as follows:

"In the heavens, each vehical has the means to control rotation, as well as thrust and retro (reverse thrust). In the front view mode one can turn left, right, climb, and dive.

"The starways are divided into 49 sectors on a 7 x 7 grid. In the top view mode one can see all within the current sector. A long range scan may be obtained by use of the 'Inform' control. Consult the Pilot's Reference Manual for the symbols needed to interpret a scan.

"One can jump to the next sector in the direction of current travel by using the Hyperjump capability of the vehicle.

"Docking with starbases can be attained at any of the unused docking ports and should be made

only at slow speeds while headed directly into the port opening. A docking fee is required. Upon docking, a 'Base Command' query will be issued and the pilot is expected to indicate the direction toward the next vehicle that will be used.

"Reentry takes place when your ship passes over the lands of Sosaria. NOTE: Only the shuttle craft has heat shields. Any vehicle will incinerate if it collides with a star.

"One may encounter and engage in combat with hostile beings in the heavens. Once combat has begun, the pilot cannot return to the top view mode until all enemy craft have been driven from the current sector or the pilot has chosen to hyperjump to the next sector. IMPORTANT: Changing from front view mode to top view mode at high speeds will surely result in a fatal collison. Be wary of fuel levels and shield condition. A ship without fuel drifts forever and a depleted shield spells certain death.

Our most learned scholars have translated the document into the common tongue of the Realm, but certains terms and phrases have no meaning even to the most erudite sage. Nonetheless, such is our desire to be rid of the scourge of Mondain that we make this information available to all

The Magical Arts

As mentioned elsewhere in this manuscript, the practice of magic had once died out in Sosaria. The power of the mystic tradition proved too corrupting for the general populace and the lords of the land decreed that all who dabbled in sorcery were to be banished. 'Twas not until the coming of Mondain the Wicked that our scholars once again unearthed the dusty tomes that contained the records of the once flourishing arcane arts, and set about to retrain adepts in the use of enchantments. Our leaders realize that once the discipline of magic is reawakened, it shall never again be put to rest. Such is our plight that even the most dreaded of the arts is laid bare to all who will try to learn it and who swear to use its powers to combat the spread of Mondain's vile influence.

While those naturally born to the practice of sorcery, who can invent their own enchantments and forge new ground in the arts, have yet to emerge as powerful wizards in their own right, a certain progress has been made. There are four artifacts available to the budding mage which will enhance the ability to weave enchantments: Staff, Wand, Amulet, and Triangle. The latter

is a magical sword that may also serve as a weapon. Several powerful spells, which will cost the buyer in both gold and experience, may be purchased in the magic shoppes of Sosaria.
These include:

Blink -- *The ability to be physically transported a short distance while underground.*

Create -- *The ability to create a wall of magical force directly in front of the spellcaster.*

Destroy -- *The ability to remove a wall of magical force that blocks the spellcaster's path.*

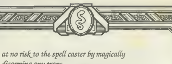
Kill -- *An enchantment hurled at a foe in front of the spellcaster. If successful, this cantrip will destroy the opponent.*

Ladder Down -- *This enchantment creates a magical ladder which permits the spellcaster to descend to the next level of a dungeon.*

Ladder Up -- *This enchantment creates a magical ladder which permits the spellcaster to ascend to the next level of a dungeon.*

Magic Missile -- *The ability to strike a foe with a blast of magical force. The more skilled and well-equipped the spellcaster, the greater the damage inflicted by the blast.*

Open -- *This spell permits the opening of coffins*



at no risk to the spell caster by magically disarming any traps.

Prayer -- The ability, when in dire straits, to call upon one's personal deity in hopes of finding a way out of a pressing dilemma. Should be used only when the spellcaster is in serious need of divine aid.

Unlock -- This spell permits the opening of chests at no risk to the spellcaster by magically disarming any traps.



The Bestiary

The Realm of Sosaria is populated by a variety of creatures, both natural and unnatural. The latter group hath been on the increase since the coming of the Evil One. Through the efforts of a posterity-minded few, a collection of names and descriptions of the more common beasts hath been compiled and may be perused herein.

Archer, Hidden -- *So lacking in courage are the minons of the vile Mondain that his Archers only ply their trade from hiding places high in the treetops of the forests of Sosaria. Their aim, nonetheless, is accurate and many a traveller has died without ever knowing whence came the deadly rain of barbed shafts.*

Balron--*Huge, leather-skinned daemon lords, the Balron are perhaps the most fearsome of the evil minions of Mondain. Armed with vicious barbed whips and the ability to cast devastating fireballs at their victims, these winged scions*

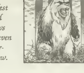




of Hell have proved to be the nemesis of the flower of Sosarian knighthood.

Bat, Giant -- *Although the Sosarian Giant Bat is but a dumb brute, this large cousin of the more common vampire bat found in other lands is indeed a menace to those unfortunate enough to disturb its subterranean slumber. The Giant Bat lives on a diet of animal blood and is not averse to feasting on adventurers.*

Bear -- *The Hill Bear towers over the tallest human and is armed with saber-like claws capable of rending even the stoutest plate armour in a single blow.*



The species was first sighted on the slopes of Mt. Drash, but hath since spread throughout the land. These creatures are extremely ill-tempered and will attack without provocation.

Carrion Creeper -- *These loathsome worms inhabit the deeper reaches of most dungeons, where they feed on the corpses of any luckless creatures they encounter. The numerous legs on their segmented bodies are equipped with small barbs that allow them to move quickly on walls and ceilings, as well as along corridors. Carrion Creepers should be avoided at all costs.*



Cyclops -- *A race of belligerent, one-eyed giants, the Cyclops dwelt in Sosaria long before humans ever landed on these shores. Driven underground many years ago, the Cyclops long to return to the surface and drive humans into the sea. Beware, for they will attack any adventurers on sight.*



Daemon -- *Fierce, bat-winged horrors armed with cruel talons and barbed tridents, Daemons were unknown in Sosaria hitherto the advent of Mondain. Drinkers of haman souls, Daemons are said to relish the screams of tortured humans above all else.*

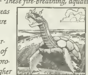


Dark Knight -- *Such is the corrupting influence of the foul Mondain that even the most virtuous of Sosarian chivalry are subject to fall under his sway. The land is now befouled with Dark Knights -- predatory warriors who seek to waylay innocent travellers and to rob them of their hard-earned goods.*





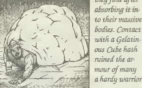
Dragon Turtle -- *These fire-breathing, aquatic dragons inhabit the seas around Sosaria and are con-sidered an even greater menace to mariners than the winds of a typhoon. They are protected by a shell tougher than enchanted plate armour, and thus are extraordinarily difficult to defeat in combat.*



Ettin -- *Travellers in the forests of our land have oft been fooled into thinking they have drawn near to a group of fellow explorers when they encounter an Ettin, for these two-headed monstrosities have been known to carry on heated discussions with themselves. An Ettin invariably abandons its dialogue when it hath the chance to attack an adventurer.*



Gelatinous Cube -- *Called 'dungeon-sweeper' by some, the Gelatinous Cube is a subterranean dweller that roams corridors in search of food. Their bodies are composed of a clear, corrosive, jelly-like substance which renders them difficult to see, but they may sometimes be detected by the remnants of armor or debris contained within them. They are omnivores, digesting anything*



they find after absorbing it into their massive bodies. Contact with a Gelatinous Cube hath ruined the armour of many a hardy warrior.

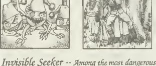




Gremlins -- *Mischievous kin of the trolls and lizard men, Gremlins are underground creatures of voracious appetite. A favorite diversion is to stealthily approach unwary travellers and pilfer their food rations. Many an adventurer hath been consigned to death by starvation below the surface of Sosaria as a result of the antics of these creatures.*

Hood -- *When the corrupt influence of the unspeakable Mondain spread throughout the Realm, even some of our stalwart peasants fell under the sway of the evil wizard. These warped individuals now roam the countryside attacking travellers. While unskilled in the use of arms, they nonetheless pose quite a nuisance to adventurers.*





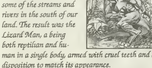
Invisible Seeker -- *Among the most dangerous of the denizens of the catacombs below our land is*

the Invisible Seeker. None hove ever seen one of these horrific slayers, for they are -- as their name implies -- unseeable. Their presence is usually first detected when open wounds suddenly begin appearing on the body of a victim. They are, however, susceptible to harm from most weapons.

Knight -- *Like their forest-dwelling counterparts the Dark Knights, the predatory Knights of Sosaria are warriors who have forsaken the ways of Chivalry for the paths of Evil. They are fierce opponents and must be treated with care if one is to avoid an untimely demise.*

Lich -- *The Lich is an evil spellcaster who, through the necromantic arts, hath entered a state of living death in order to prolong an unholy reign on earth. Woe to the explorer who stumbles upon the lair of a lich, for the undead mage will guard its domain fiercely and attack without hesitation.*

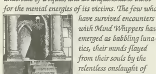
Lizard Man -- *When Mondain first came to our land he performed unspeakable experiments with his servitors and the fierce reptiles that inhabit some of the streams and rivers in the south of our land. The result was the Lizard Man, a being both reptilian and human in a single body, armed with cruel teeth and a disposition to match its appearance.*



Mimic -- *Beware the treacherous Mimic, for it hath been the doom of many a dungeon explorer. Disguised as a tempting treasure chest, the Mimic patiently awaits the overly-curious adventurer. When the victim makes as if to examine the chest, the Mimic attacks with a ferocity unmatched.*

Mind Whipper -- *Truly hideous, the Mind Whipper is a being with the body of a human, a face that resembles nothing so much as the*

underside of a squid, and an unquenchable thirst for the mental energies of its victims. The few who



have survived encounters with Mind Whippers have emerged as babbling lunatics, their minds flayed from their souls by the relentless onslaught of these terrible creatures.

Minotaur -- *As mentioned before, the evil Mondain experimented ceaselessly with the cross-breeding of man and beast in an effort to create the ultimate soldier. As if the creation of the dread Lizard Man was not enough, the vile wizard also mated the famed Baratarian fighting bull with some of his followers, resulting in the Minotaur -- a horror that walks on two legs like a man, but which has the head and the cruel horns of a bull.*

Necromancer -- *The Necromancer is a mage whose specialty is the practice of the arcane arts that pertain to the dead. Practitioners of such a*

morbid specialty were naturally drawn to the foul Mondain as jackals are to the carrion of the plains.

Ness Creature -- *The seas surrounding Sosaria are home to a number of beasts, among which numbers the dread Ness Creature. For many years these reptilian behemoths were thought to be naught but the workings of the overwrought imaginations of mariners. The sinking of the frigate Pembroke in plain view of a small armada hath disproven this belief.*

Orc -- *Small, pig-visaged humanoids, the Orcs were the vanguard of Mondain's first advance. Tribal by nature, they are sub-human at best, just a slight cut above true bestiality. They abhor all things human and cultured and will lay waste to anything fashioned by human hands. 'Tis said that they relish the taste of human flesh.*

Pirates -- *The pirates that infest the coastal waters of Sosaria are the scourge of the honest mariner. They ply the waterways seeking unarmed merchant ships to plunder, and often press the younger crew members into service as marauders. Once engaged, a pirate vessel and its crew will battle to the end, seeking no quarter and offering none.*

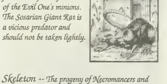
Ranger -- *Alas! Even the noble Ranger, preserver of the woodlands and keeper of the forests, hath fallen under the sway of dark Mondain! These matchless trailblazers long watched over the preserves of the Sosarian nobility, but as Mondain's treachery took hold, many of them forsook their old ways and became predators themselves. He who is pursued by a Ranger must turn and make a stand, for once on a trail a Ranger will never give it up.*





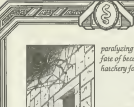
Rat, Giant -- *The underground passages of the*

Realm are prowled by oversized rodents, the result of Mondain's necromancy and an abundance of food in the form of victims of the Evil One's minions. The Sosarian Giant Rat is a vicious predator and should not be taken lightly.



Skeleton -- *The progeny of Necromancers and undead Liches, Skeletons are the animated corpses of dead warriors from which the flesh hath withered and fallen away. They fight tirelessly in an effort to carry out the bidding of their dark masters.*

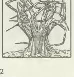
Spider, Giant -- *Few moments hold more terror for the intrepid explorer than when a Giant Spider, venom dripping from its fangs, is encountered in the corridor of a subterranean labyrinth. These creatures are dazzling in their agility and tireless in their search for prey. Fight well, or face a*



paralyzing sting and the fate of becoming a living hatchery for their young.

Squid, Giant -- *Sosarian mariners swap legends of the Kraken, or Giant Squid, in every pub in every port of the Realm. These monstrous, creatures have been known to rise from the ocean depths, seize a vessel in their long tentacles, and drag the hapless vessel and its crew to a watery grave in the space of but a half-dozen heartbeats.*

Tangler -- *Looking for all the world as naught but a vine-covered tree stump, the Tangler lurks in subterranean corridors, waiting to ensnare explorers of the underground.*



Once a Tangler hath enmeshed an adventurer in its tentacles, it will hold the victim fast until starvation ends the struggle. The monstrosity then feasts on the corpse.

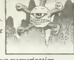
Thief -- Long before the coming of Mondain, the common cutpurse was a plague to travellers in Sosaria. Lurking in alleyways, poised behind trees, and skulking in dungeon corridors, these villains are always ready to relieve innocent citizens of their valuables and their lives. Tis a service to your fellow Sosarian to exterminate a Thief whenever possible.



Trent -- Native to the woodlands of Sosaria, the evil Trent seems like an ordinary oak tree until one approaches near enough to be ensnared in the grasp of its pliant branches. Once it hath crushed the life from the victim, the Trent then devours it, leaving no trace of its prey to warn other travellers.

Viper -- *Since before the dawn of civilization, the race of serpents hath roamed the land. From the most harmless garden snake to the giant constrictors, these legless creatures have always inspired fear in the human race. In the case of the Viper, this fear is well-founded. These vicious reptiles strike fiercely and frequently at all who stray too closely. Their venom-laden fangs bring a swift yet painful death.*

Wandering Eyes -- *Many a dungeon seeker hath been startled to enter a darkened chamber and be greeted by a number of eyes staring out of the murky blackness. Stare not long, for the Wandering Eyes weave a hypnotic spell that entrances even the most strong-willed and leaves one helpless before the magical onslaught that inevitably follows mesmerization.*



Warlock -- *Rogue practitioners of the magical arts, Warlocks are the evil servitors of Mondain. The Foul One hath trained them in the casting of bolts of mystic energy and sent them forth to wreak havoc among the populace. Slay them if ye can, for the arcane arts should never be used for wicked purpose.*



Wraith -- *Summoned from the nethermost regions of Hell by Mondain's perverse enchantments, Wraiths are the restless souls of dead clerics. Once on the material plane, they drift about seeking potential "converts" to the discipline of Evil. Since one must first die in order to be converted, 'tis strongly advised that their enticements be resisted.*



Zorn -- Little is known of the mysterious Zorn. 'Tis a creature that not only defies logic, but that seems to defy the very laws of nature. It can burrow through anything and is completely omnivorous. In battle it seems to generate far more force than one would estimate possible from a creature of its size. When slain, the Zorn quickly evaporates, thus none have ever been studied closely.



I, Lord British, would like to thank the following persons for their efforts in creating this work.

Special thanks goes out to those who spent many arduous months programming this new version:

Dav Holle as lead programmer and team manager; Dr. Cat, Steve Meuse, Dallas Snell, John Miles and Richard Garriott for their brilliant programming efforts.

Dave Albert for the product management and eloquent writings herein.

Denis [illegible]. Loubet for the magnificent illustrations within this book and to Lori Ogwulu for her outstanding graphic and design work.

And to all those persons found within this game, I extend warm greetings.

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